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ABSTRACT

Developments in the linguistic and non-linguistic scenes in the Philippines indicate the emergence of a dialect of English that should appropriately be labelled Philippine English. Filipinos paradoxically have emancipated themselves from American English by taking over the code for their own creative uses. Philippine English has become and will continue to be distinctively different from American, British, Canadian and Australian English. In terms of classroom teaching. language education programming, and materials preparation, this will mean the end of American cultural content and the emergence of Philippine cultural content. (Author/CFM)

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CONTENT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE MATERIALS IN THE PHILIPPINES: A CASE STUDY OF CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC EMANCIPATION

1. INTRODUCTION

An assumed objective in foreign language teaching in the United States is to make students aware of and appreciate the culture of the native speakers of the foreign language.

Hence, the standard pedagogical manuals offered by various publishing houses attempt to teach facets of the culture of the target language, the value-system of its people, their beliefs, behavioral patterns, even gestures, through dialogues, readings, literary selections, and ubiquitously, through footnotes on culture.

Spanish, for example, is a case in point. The target culture in the foreign language textbooks is Latin American Culture rather than Peninsular Spanish Culture, but the rationale behind the selection of content materials is the same.

When the foreign language in question is English, a choice has to be made as to cultural content - - British or American. In the ESOL (English as a Second Language) textbooks which were imported at the beginning of the TESOL movement in this country, because of continuing contacts with the United States, the cultural content was for the most part American.[1] The classic model for various TESOL books which were published in the Philippines was the Lado and Fries Michigan series, initially intended for foreign students arriving in the United States.[2]

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[1] In this paper, I do not make a distinction between English as a foreign language and English as a second language, as Marckwardt does. The two terms are used interchangeably for my purposes.

[2] The TESOL movement in the Philippines, for purposes of dating, is best considered as having arrived with the founding of the Philippine Center for Language Study in 1958 ; see Sibayan 1973 .

The materials developed for the elementary schools of the Philippines, the so-called PCLS guides, were heavy on pattern practice as a technique, attempted to implement the aural-oral approach, and indirectly taught American content through its dialogues and, at least in intention, controlled reading exercises. Thus, there was emphasis on mimicking the way Americans greet each other, the way Americans interact in social situations (introductions, farewells, and casual meetings). With the emphasis on pattern practice, reading and content had to be relegated to second place. It is in the secondary school series of textbooks, all locally done, for the most part composed or compiled by authors who has been trained in TESOL methodology, either at the Language Study Center of Philippine Normal College, the University of the Philippines Institute of Language Teaching, or the Ateneo de Manila Language Center, or if trained abroad at UCLA or Michigan, where one observes a deliberate attempt to teach American culture and behavioral patterns. Typically, in textbooks which attempt to unify the lessons through a story line, one gets a Filipino character who for some reason or other is in the United States as a student and who describes American culture from his various meeetings with Americans as a newly-arrived visitor in the United States. We shall not speak further on comments at this point on how difficult it was to maintain this story line while preserving naturalness and how artificial and strained this story line often turned out to be.

2. NON-CONFORMISTS IN THE PHILIPPINE TESOL MOVEMENT

The TESOL movement in the Philippines, roughly from 1958 to 1974, represents, at least for the public school system at the elementary level one of the few truly successfully implemented innovations in the history of Philippine Education.[3]

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[3] For a documented study and evaluation, see Sibayan, Otanes, Gonzalez and Dagot 1975 and Institute of Philippine Culture 1975.

While the aural-oral approach dominated English language teaching in the public school sector, change was less rapid in the private school sector which served however no more than 5% of the student population. Where the PCLS guides and their derivatives were not available, schools continued to use the older grammar-analysis (likewise American-derived) textbooks based on 1930 American models or imported textbooks written for Americans, which took a communication arts approach to language teaching, assuming knowledge of structure on the part of native speakers of English.

For the topic of this paper, however, which is cultural content, what is interesting is that at least in the Philippine-made English textbooks of pre-TESOL vintage, there was no attempt to teach American culture but to teach English as a language to express Philippine realities. One remembers the Osias readers, which contained stories on carabaos and barrio life, for example.

One non-conformist series in the TESOL movement, Gonzalez et al, Let's Learn English This Way and Let's Speak English This Way (published in 1966 and 1967) resisted this trend and attempted to use English to express Philippine realities and to use English in Philippine situations.[4]

In any case, what is important to emphasize is that while the TESOL movement in the Philippines assumed the teaching of American cultural content as part of its objectives in the language teaching program, both those who were sluggish in implementing the innovation and a small group of those who had implemented the innovation but decided not to assume this objective as part of their total program did not follow this trend at the time.

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[4] We do not wish to claim undue credit for this non-conformity. At the time, without fully realizing the implications of the choice, the writers and the project director merely went by instinct and decided to make their choice without fully nationalizing to themselves the why's and wherefore's of such a choice. In fact, it was another TESOL specialist, Bonifacio P. Sibayan, who called our attention to this distinctive feature of our series.

3. ENGLISH IN THE PHILIPPINES: Standard Filipino English or Philippine English?

As early as 1969, Llamzon had documented emerging or emergent characteristics of the English language as it was then used in the Philippines. While one may question the claim that such Filipino English has been standardized, one cannot deny the peculiar characteristics of English, especially its phonological aspects, as it is found in the Philippines. Llamzon's contribution, it seems to me, was his attempt to document this dialect (especially in his calling attention to lexical items and collocations which he termed Filipinisms) and to state the thesis that in effect there was a number (albeit a very small minority) of young Filipinos for whom English had in fact become a first language.[5]

In other words, the type of Filipino English described by Llamzon was in effect in the process of creolization.

I have questioned the standardization of this brand of Philippine English, especially its phonology. Its lexicon and syntactical peculiarities, at least as to its written phase (and often formal levels),is now apt for documentation; a case can be made for considering this type of written English in the Philippines as standardized. In comparison with other dialects or variants of English, I would prefer to call this form of English PHILIPPINE ENGLISH rather than Filipino English, analogous with American, British, Australian and Canadian and perhaps Indian, Singaporean, and Malaysian English.[6]

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[5] The bilingual and even multilingual situation in most homes in the Philippines, including those of the affluent where this group of English-as-a-first-language speakers has emerged, makes it more proper for us to look at the situation as one of bilingualism. The Filipino child in such a situation learns a form of English from his parents and perhaps, in a few cases, poorly educated yayas but likewise learns a vernacular or Pilipino side-by-side with English.

[6] I am presently looking for a promising doctoral student in linguistics who could work with me on the documentation of written PHILIPPINE ENGLISH.

A Philippine variant of English has thus emerged in the Philippines, a variant which indirectly received legal sanction as early as 1935 when the first Constitution of the Philippines declared that English and Spanish would continue to be official languages of the Commonwealth and as late as 1973 when the second Constitution declared Pilipino and English as official languages of the Philippines.[7]

The recognition of the official status of Pilipino and English implied that henceforth these two official languages would be the languages of instruction, an implication enacted into policy by Department Order No. 25, series 1974, of the Department of Education and Culture, otherwise known as the Bilingual Education Policy.

While planning for the development of Pilipino, the intent of the legislation is that bilingualism will continue to be a feature of Philippine social life. So far as legislation is concerned, the place of English, Philippine English, is assured, side by side with Pilipino, which is of course intended to take on a larger role in the future.

4. IMPLICATIONS OF BILINGUALISM FOR THE PHILIPPINES

In thus appropriating to themselves the language of their former colonizers, the Filipinos by implication at the same time arrogated to themselves the right to change this language. Setting aside a nationalistic focus and observing the situation objectively from that of an amateur sociologist of language, I do not consider this development a case of continuing to be a victim of linguistic imperialism, but a case of linguistic appropriation dictated by convenience.

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[7] A subsequent Presidential decree added Spanish as a third official language of the country.

The Filipino has appropriated English and modified it into a Philippine variant not out of any loyalty to his former colonizer but as a matter of convenience, to have a language of wider communication, not only for his contacts with the West but even for his contacts with his ASEAN brothers, and to have the language of science and technology which he vitally needs for the development of his country. Here is no language loyalty to his former colonizers; certainly, his is not an integrative motivation for learning a language but purely an instrumental one (to use the distinction made by the McGill University psycholinguists in investigating language motivation).

Again, viewing the situation objectively, prescinding from a nationalistic focus on the desirability of developing Pilipino (I assume this desideratum), I observe that the factors favoring the maintenance of Philippine English at present are too strong to threaten its place in Philippine life, perhaps to the chagrin of proponents who equate nationalism with Pilipino. As long as the social rewards for the use of English exist - - and they do, with no signs of attenuation - then English, Philippine English, will continue to be used here, at least for certain social transactions. This is a sociolinguistic fact that cannot be gainsaid nor legislated against nor even spoken against with much effectiveness. Language maintenance is dictated by factors other than linguistic and the nationalistic sentiments in the Philippines for the most part do not identify sufficiently with Pilipino to threaten the place of English. At the same time, however, the same sociolinguistic factors which at present are maintaining the role of Philippine English are likewise present to modify English and cause it to take on a Philippine variant not only in its phonological aspects but likewise its lexical and syntactic as well as semantic aspects.

The Filipino, at least the educated Filipino - - and he comprises a very large section of the population - - knows two languages and, like any bilingual, switches codes, apparently with great gusto. The situation is thus ready for a form of language mixture (I shall not call this by the pejorative name of

pidgin) which in effect can become creolized because indigenized.

Returning now to the initial problem adverted to, namely, the cultural content of the teaching of English in the Philippines:

This assumption of foreign language teaching is no longer viable in the Philippines, since the Filipino learns English not to be able to integrate himself with other speakers of English, be they British or American, but to be able to integrate himself with other Filipinos who speak English[8] and to use English to communicate with Westerners and other Easterners about science, economics, and geopolitics.

Content in language teaching in the Philippines is thus to be culture-free of non-Philippine realities but culture-bound by Philippine realities and Philippine necessities; it will include such relatively culture-free (although available in English) areas of knowledge such as mathematics, science, and technology .

In effect, this was the rationale and thinking among the framers of what to me is an enlightened Bilingual Education Policy.

What this means is that the teaching of English must now be based on an analysis of the domains in which English is used in the Philippines.

5.1 DOMAINS OF ENGLISH IN THE PHILIPPINES

English is rarely used in homes (except in affluent homes where an attempt is made to teach English to children as early as possible). Neither is it used in familial social gatherings with relatives, which likewise belong to the domain of the vernacular (be it Pilipino or some other vernacular). Depending on the geographical location, Pilipino or the local vernacular is the language of

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[8] See the documentation on this in Castillo 1972 .

of transaction for marketing (even in Westernized grocery stores), transportation (the jeepney or bus driver, the taxi driver), commerical transactions (in most sari-sari stores, even department stores, restaurants, government offices and functionaries up to at least the middle management level).

The language of entertainment, thanks to the development of the local movie industry, is now bilingual, so that even the Western-educated Filipino sees not only movies in English but movies in Pilipino. On TV, in addition to movies, the educated Filipino still watches TV serials in English while live shows in Pilipino command a following among the less Westernized members of households. Radio listening among the less affluent is mostly in Pilipino while the more affluent confine radio listening to music, presumably Western music.[9]

The domain of English seems to be confined to the following: in school, under the new program, for science, mathematics, and technology, for English classes, and undoubtedly, for the more advanced levels of the social sciences and even humanities; in business, at the board level and at formal meetings to map out strategies and to enunciate company policy, for daily interaction among colleagues at the managerial level, including informal meetings over business lunches; in social gatherings, with foreigners or with colleagues at the managerial level, hence, cocktail parties and formal banquets and dinners; in entertainment, for certain movies and for certain plays and non-local TV serials; in restaurants, only at the most expensive and tourist-oriented establishments; in travel abroad and international conferences.

Spatially, therefore, English is extra domiciliary (outside the home) and even then, only for certain clearly definable loci: tourist-oriented restaurants;

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[9] For some data on the language of the mass media in the Philippines, see Gonzalez and Pattedo 1974.

school (certain classes); office (board room, the manager's office; in these places, code-switching often takes place; theatres (shared with Pilipino); at home, the living room (for TV).

This particular area of investigation in what Hymes (1967) calls the 'ethnography of speaking' presents fascinating problems challenging the theorist, especially in his search for an adequate mathematical model to capture the algorithm of language choice.[10] In the Philippines, language choice is not only between Pilipino and English, but likewise, in the case of multilinguals, the Vernacular, and finally Intermittent Code-Switching between Pilipino and English.[11] The parameters which must be factored into the final decision include topic, interlocutor, setting, which however do not lend themselves to easy prediction since there seems to be an ordering and weighting of these parameters in the decision-making process.

The following diagram, by no means fully satisfactory, at least outlines the parameters involved and attempts to make a preliminary attempt at delineating the domains of English:

F I G U R E 1

It can be seen therefore that the domain of English in Philippine life, while predicted as continuing and not in danger of extinction, is confined to the relatively narrow area of SCIENCE, MATHEMATICS, TECHNOLOGY and THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND THE HUMANITIES (hence, confined to university settings and academic interlocutors) and to TECHNOCRATIC DISCUSSIONS confined to certain business settings and only to certain interlocutors, these discussions themselves being the long-term after-effects of previous academic discussions.

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[10] For some interesting Philippine data, see Sibayan and Otanes 1969, Gatbonton and Galang 1973, and Barrios et al. 1974.

[11] For some data and an attempt at linguistic description of code-switching, see Bautista 1975.

The domain of entertainment and the domain of social interaction in commercial establishments (restaurants and theaters) is negligible.

Thus, in the terminology of the British applied linguists, English for Special Purposes (ESP) takes on added importance, specifically, no longer English for Personal Purposes (EPP), which is negligible, but English for Academic Purposes (EAP), which becomes paramount. In terms of classroom teaching, language education programming, and materials preparation, this will mean the end of American cultural content and the emergence of Philippine cultural content, for what will be taught will be Philippine English as it is used in the domains where English is used in the Philippines, largely for relatively culture-free content in science, mathematics, and technology. This will probably mean the refocusing of emphasis on scientific prose rather than literature (except for the specialized subjects at the graduate school level of the university), emphasis on content reading and expository writing rather than dialogue memorization, and speaking not for daily social interaction but speaking for formal situations where indeed English continues to be used in local situations.

I do not foresee, this, however, as the end of speech training, since phonetic distinctions must continue to be made for ease in communication. The acquisition, however, of an American accent or a Middle-Western accent, or for that matter, the Areneo-accent, will become a linguistic museum piece and curiosity. Gone will be the teaching of Shakespeare in Philippine high schools, the perfervid recitation of the speeches from Julius Caesar for oratory, the recitation of 'The Man with the Hoe' and 'Richard Cory' and the reading of Dickens and Mark Twain in favor of prosaic expository content and the works of Nick Joaquin, the early NVM Gonzalez, Daguio; it will also mean the end of Jose Garcia Villa, Carlos Bulosan, Bienvenido Santos, and the latter-day NVM Gonzalez and Epifanio San Juan. Somehow, Filipinos talking about their difficulties integrating with American life as grape-pickers in Stockton and cannery packers in

LANGUAGE DOMAINS

SETTING

+ HOME		- HOME								
		SCHOOL		OFFICE		THEATERS	COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS			FOREIGN
TV ENTER-TAINMENT		CLASS	- CLASS	BOARD ROOM	MANAGEMENT OFFICE		STORES	RESTAURANTS TOURIST	RESTAURANTS NON-TOURIST	
Imported Serials		Science Mathematics Technology Theoretical Social Science Humanities		Meeting Board Policy Level Strategy	Reports Policy Enunciation Announce-ments	English Movies		Social Interaction		Social Profes-sional Inter-action
Live Shows and Pilipino Movies		Social Studies	Non-Academic Social Interaction			Tagalog Movies	Social Interaction		Social Interaction	

LEGEND:
Red - Pilipino
Black - English

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Alaska will cease to be interesting because irrelevant. Our enduring literary heroes will be Nick Joaquin, who happily has never been contaminated with Americana, and our new heroes will be the ilk of Cirilo Bautista, Gregorio Brillantes, and the new writers of the Manila Review and the Archipelago.

5.2. THE LINGUISTIC SHAPE OF PHILIPPINE ENGLISH IN THE FUTURE

In thus appropriating English, Filipinos paradoxically have likewise emancipated themselves from American English and have taken the code for their own creative uses, a emancipation which is bound to result in novelty in the creative uses of the patterning of English at the lexical and syntactic level, in addition to semantic and phonological innovation.

What this will mean is that Philippine English has become and will continue to become distinctively different from American, British, Canadian and Australian English.

Undoubtedly, this is the partial reason why non-Filipinos find reading Philippine newspapers and Philippine prose, especially the academic prose of college students, so 'different' and even 'deteriorated', because expressive not only of Philippine realities and Philippine sentiments, values, beliefs and sensitivity and temperament but also of Philippine syntax and thought patterns. Sociolinguistically, this follows the inexorable results of the localization and indigenization of English, which undoubtedly upsets many Miss Grundies, latter-day Thomasites, brown Americans, and sociolinguistically naive Filipino teachers of English.

A creative tension will be necessary which will balance the effect of indigenization with those of the imperatives of international communication, since the total localization of Philippine English would be counter-productive, pace the prescriptivists in our midst.

6. PHILIPPINE ENGLISH AND PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN RELATIONS

Beyond sociolinguistics and going into politico-linguistics and economico-linguistics, I welcome this appropriation of English which I have described as a healthy development.

A superficial reason would be the assurance of continuing understanding in Philippine-American realtions through provision of the linguistic code necessary for the channels of communication.

Much more significant to me is the appropriation of English as an official language, a choice dictated by convenience, and with this appropriation, the right to change this language for creative Philippine uses.

It is interesting to note that the Bilingual Education Policy was enunciated in 1974, the year of expiration of the Laurel-Langley Agreement and the end of parity in the Philippines. Far from viewing the choice of English as an official language to be the continuation of linguistic imperialism, I consider this choice as a parallel, albeit accidental (since the framers of the policy did not have such parallelism in mind), development of economic and linguistic emancipation.

With the alignment of Philippine foreign policy with that of the Third World, the declaration of independence from specialties with the United States, the opening of relations with the People's Republic of China and with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, coupled with the Manila Declaration by the Group of 77, spearheaded by the Philippines, and the UNCTAD policy speech of President Marcos, the Philippines has come into its own and has cut its umbilical cord economic, political, and paradoxically, linguistic.

June, 1976

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